

Death Gain to the Christian.

RVH.
A
S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE

D E A T H

OF THE

Rev. THOMAS CHORLTON,

PASTOR OF

A CHURCH OF CHRIST,

I N

S N O W ' s - F I E L D S ;

Who departed this Life, December 19, 1774, in the
34th Year of his Age.

Taken in Short-hand when delivered ; and faithfully
transcribed by JOSEPH GURNEY.

And published at the Request of the CHURCH.

WITH

THE ORATION AT THE INTERMENT.

By JOHN TOWERS,

Minister of the Gospel in Bartholomew-Close.

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DEATH
OF THE
REV. THOMAS CHORLTON



A CHURCH OF CHRIST

AND PUBLISHED BY THE
REV. THOMAS CHORLTON
OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
IN THE CITY OF LONDON
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THE ORATION AT THE INTERMENT
OF JOHN TOWERS

BY THE REV. THOMAS CHORLTON
OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
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O Earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord, which by his divine providence, and the particular desire of our dear brother, your late Minister, with a view to improve the present mournful providence, I am now to read to you, and which you will find recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the apostles, and the 28th verse.

THOU HAST MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS
OF LIFE, THOU SHALT MAKE ME FULL OF
JOY WITH THY COUNTENANCE.

DEATH, judgment, and eternity, are awful subjects, subjects of terror to the ungodly, but in which the godly rejoice, though it be with trembling; and these awful subjects are always profitable for our meditation, but in a peculiar manner they should be attended to, whenever we come to the house of God.

It is our wisdom to attend to every part of the worship of God, as those that must shortly die, and who after death must come to judgment: and if in the house of God at one time more than another, these awful themes are to be attended to, it surely should be at such a time as this; when we are met together to improve so awful a providence as that which now assembles us; even the death of a faithful minister of the gospel of Christ, who

not long since delighted us with his voice in declaring the good news of salvation by Jesus Christ; and instructed us in those things that concern our eternal peace; but who is now no more in this world, and yet being dead, still speaks unto us. He now calls loudly upon us to prepare to meet our God, and, as it were, says, “ye must shortly follow, be ye therefore also ready.”

There is no doubt, when he desired these words to be made use of as an improvement of his death, but that he had some happy experience of them in his own soul, and was fully persuaded that the full accomplishment of them would be his happy enjoyment to all eternity. He had already tasted the excellency of the path of life, and the goodness of God; he had experienced the joy of God’s countenance, but he was longing to have the full beatific vision in the world above; and, as a glorious testimony that wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; as a declaration, that, “happy are the people that are in such a case, and blessed is that man whose God is the Lord;” he desired that a portion of scripture, excellent and full of comfort as this is, might be made use of to call upon his brethren to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and to stir up his fellow-mortals to follow the same happy track, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, in hope that all other things shall be added to them; and that the same God that had been his God and his guide, even unto death, might guide us by his counsel, and afterwards receive us to glory.

In more particularly discoursing from these words, we propose

First, To observe, that they were originally applicable to Christ, and had their accomplishment in him.

Then we will enquire, Secondly, What is generally to be understood by the *ways of life*.

Thirdly, Observe how it is that God shews unto his people *these ways*.

Enquire in the next place, What we are to understand by *God's countenance*.

And lastly, Shew the happiness of those who are made full of joy therewith.—We will then speak more directly concerning our dear brother departed, and endeavor at some more particular improvement of the whole: and this will we do as our God shall help.

These words were originally, a quotation from the 16th psalm, and the last verse, where the psalmist says, “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: In thy presence is fulness of joy: At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.” And these words are quoted by the apostle, who, in this chapter, declares unto us, that they had their accomplishment in the person of Christ, and that David before saw that God would raise up his Son from the dead. And therefore thus spake.

There is first this to be observed concerning the quotation itself, That it is not verbatim, or exactly according to what is written in the psalms; it is there said, “thou wilt shew me the path of life:” and it is here said, “thou hast made known to
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“ me the ways of life ;” declaring, that as *before* it was not accomplished, so *now* it was, and the reason of the alteration is evident; when the royal psalmist spake after that manner : it was before the coming of Christ, and consequently before his resurrection ; then it was to be set forth as somewhat that *was* to be accomplished, and it is mentioned in the *future* tense. But when the apostle spake these words, he made use of the same expression in the *past* tense, because before that time in which he spake Christ had finished salvation ; he had completed the work of the redemption of his people, he had made an end of their sin, and brought in for them an everlasting righteousness. And therefore it is said here, “ Thou hast shewed me, or made “ known to me the ways of life, thou shalt make “ me full of joy with thy countenance.” And it is to be observed further, as these words have their accomplishment in Christ, so it was in this sense that the Lord shewed to him the ways of life, because he raised him from the dead, as the apostle said in another place, it was impossible for Christ to be holden by death ; when he had finished the work of redemption ; when he had atoned for our sin ; when he had fully satisfied divine justice, it was then impossible that he could be holden by the bands of death any longer ; and therefore, like a spiritual Sampson, he burst the bands of death, he carried away the very gates of death themselves, “ he ascended up on high, and led “ captivity captive.” And when this was done, his heavenly Father shewed him the ways of life.

It was also a fulfilment of that promise in the 53d of Isaiah, and 11th verse, where it was said
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concerning Christ, that "he should see of the
 "travel of his soul, and be satisfied." This
 was accomplished when God made him full of
 Joy (according to the text) with his countenance,
 when he admitted him into the heavenly regions,
 and when that was said concerning the glorious
 Jesus, "Lift up your heads, ye gates; be ye lift up,
 "ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory
 "shall come in." Then it was that Christ saw of
 the travel of his soul, and was satisfied; he was
 then admitted into heaven, not as a private person
 only, but as the head and representative of his
 people, as an everlasting token that all his peo-
 ple shall be admitted there likewise; and that not
 a hoof of them shall be left behind.

And so it was remarkably fulfilled in the same
 Jesus, when all the fruit of his labor was enjoyed
 by him in the glorious exaltation to which he is
 now advanced at the right hand of God; for
 because he humbled himself, therefore "God
 "hath highly exalted him, and given him a name
 "which is above every name, that at the name of
 "Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue
 "should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the
 "glory of God the Father." In this view of the
 text, Christ had the paths or ways of life shewed
 to him, and made known unto him; and the Lord,
 his heavenly Father, made him full of joy with his
 countenance.

But that which is true of Christ, is in some
 measure true of his members; for Christ and his
 people are one; his Father is their Father, and his
 God is their God; they are all blessed in him
 with spiritual blessings: and remember, christian,
 that as Christ is heir of God, thou art a joint heir
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with Christ; and all the good things of God himself, so far as they are communicable, and so far as they need to be communicated for thy happiness, thou shalt have communicated unto thee; according to thy several wants in the fulness of time; and hence it is that this portion of scripture, which, in its original meaning, was applicable more directly to the person of Christ, is applicable to all the members of Christ. And our dear brother, confident of this, was led to apply it to his own soul, to put his trust and confidence therein, and to make his boast in it all the day long.

I shall now proceed to enquire in a more general sense, what is to be understood by the ways of life. "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life." Every soul that has been conversant with the word of God, that accounts it more than his necessary food, and that has found it to be sweeter to his taste than honey or the honey-comb, will naturally be led to anticipate the thought, and will easily conclude that Christ is the way of life: for there is not one poor sinner that is now in the presence of God, that has ever found life any other way, nor of all the human race that ever have lived, or that ever shall live, not one of them ever found or shall find life but in and by Jesus Christ: who tells us himself in the xivth of John and 6th verse, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." All spiritual life comes to us from the fulness of Jesus; all salvation from hell is through the redemption of his precious blood; and if by divine grace we are brought to heaven at last, we shall to all eternity praise the glorious Jesus for taking all the obstacles out of the way, and for bringing us to the enjoyment of God in heaven; so that Christ in an emphatic

phatic sense, is the way of life. To be shewn Christ, and to be made acquainted with Christ, to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings; is to know the way of life: hence it was that Paul said, "for to me to live, is Christ; and to die, is gain."

But the ways of life (as it is here in the plural number) includes also, the way of true religion, the way of godliness; or as the scripture calls it, "the way of righteousness." Thus it is said in the 12th of Proverbs, and 28th verse, "In the way of righteousness is life, and in the path-way thereof, there is no death." By the way of righteousness, there, is intended true religion, the fear of God, the experience of the saints, and that which passes in the soul of the converted man. If we know what it is to be born again, we know something of the way of life, which is the way of righteousness. When God regenerates our souls, when he makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus, he then leads us to Christ's righteousness, and not only *imputes* that to us, but he *imparts* righteousness to our souls. In other words, he begins and carries on a work of sanctification; so that to be acquainted with true religion, to be converted to God, to be made a new creature in Jesus Christ, to have old things passed away, and to have all things become new, to have all this brought into our souls, is to know somewhat of the way of life.

This is the way of life, and there is no coming to heaven without this experience; all profession will do nothing for us without this; and all the vain notions that we bring into the world with us, or that we entertain of safety without this, will all perish like the hope of the hypocrite, and whatever

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we may conceive of, or however deceive ourselves, the word of Christ will still hold good. "Except
" a man be born again he cannot see the king-
" dom of God."

The way of life also is the way of wisdom, or wisdom's ways; concerning which, such excellent things are said in the 3d chapter of the Proverbs, where we are told, that "wisdom's ways are ways
" of pleasantness, and all her paths peace;" and it is said of wisdom's ways in the 18th verse of that chapter, that she is a tree of life to those that retain her, to those that follow her, and to those that love her. And the reason that wisdom's ways is the way of life, or that the way of life is called by that name, is, because Christ is the wisdom, as well as the power of God, and because it is our wisdom to part with all for Christ. There is not a wise man in the world but the true Christian. We are not going to intimate but that there are many men of great wisdom, of a natural kind, and very competent abilities for the studying of natural things: they may be well acquainted with the various revolutions of the stars, may have much knowledge of the heavenly bodies, and be well skilled in the learned languages; and all these things are very good in their place. But no man is truly wise unto salvation but the true christian; and all *their* wisdom will not save the soul. "Vain man would
" be wise though he be born like the wild ass's
" colt." So that if ye would know who is the truly wise man, find out the poor sinner that has felt himself lost and undone, and has seen such an excellency in Christ that he desires to count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of him. He is a man possessed of sterling wisdom. His wisdom will abide for
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ever, and will terminate in everlasting bliss, in the enjoyment of God in heaven.

We may add further, the death of a christian, the death of a godly man, the death of a heaven-born soul, is the way of life. It is well said, (though often improperly applied to unconverted men) *Mors janua vite*, i. e. Death is the gate of life. It is so to the christian, but it is so to none else, because as soon as ever the christian dies, "the day of his death is better than the day of his birth." He bids an eternal adieu to all the troubles of the world; he loses his body of sin and death; he is set at an everlasting distance from all that troubled his soul; he goes where "the wicked cease from troubling, where the weary are for ever at rest;" and he enters into the full enjoyment of eternal life.

And is this the case, christian? Then if thou hast fled to Christ for refuge from death, which thou art so apt to fear, and that thou art sometimes so much in bondage through the fear of. Death, is then to thee one of the ways of life, and it is that way by which thy God will bring thee into his presence, where is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

We will only add further concerning the way of life, that God's raising his people's bodies from the grave, is also the way of life. This is evidently included in the expression, for it was accomplished as to the person of Christ, in his resurrection from the dead; and so it is accomplished in respect to the Lord's people, in his raising their bodies from the grave. For it is thy comfort, believer, and if it was not for the weakness of thy faith it would be more thy comfort "that this mor-

"tal shall put on immortality, this corruption
 "shall put on incorruption, and that saying will
 "will be fulfilled, Death is swallowed up in vic-
 "tory." Yea if thou hast the least faith in a
 precious Christ, if he is precious to thy soul, thou
 mayest well take up the triumph, and say, "O
 "death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy
 "victory? the sting of death is sin, and the
 "strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God
 "who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ
 "our Lord." Yes, believer, thy body must shortly
 return to the dust from whence it was taken, and
 then thou wilt have reason to say, (or thy sur-
 viving brethren of thee) that "Corruption is thy
 "father, and the worm is thy sister and thy
 "mother." But the scattered atoms of thy dust
 are precious in the sight of God, his eye of omni-
 science will still attend to, and recollect them; and
 thou shalt appear again, and in thy flesh (as Job
 sayeth) thou shalt see God.

And we might well observe concerning the way
 of life in general, especially looking at Christ and
 godliness, as the ways of life, that it is a narrow
 way. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way
 "that leads to life, and few there be that find it."
 There are a great number of professors who en-
 deavor to make God's way broader than it is, but
 in vain are all their attempts; by striving to
 make God's way broader than it is, they get out of
 his way, or in deed, and in truth, they were many
 of them never in it: but God's ways are the same
 still. Professor, there is no room in that way for
 thy sin; no room for the world; there is no room
 for thine own righteousness; no room for any
 thing but the soul and its infirmities; there indeed

thou mayest glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon thee. And it is not only a narrow way, but it is a thorny way, a way of tribulation. The faithfulness of Christ is to be observed when he told his disciples the way they were to walk in; he told them also, "in the world ye shall have tribulation;" and we do not endeavor to deceive poor sinners, by making them think that religion is attended with less trouble than it really is; we fear not to say that all who would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But what then? Underneath are the everlasting arms. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory;" and as the hymn says,

"There's something secret sweetens all.

"[And] Above your highest mirth,

"Our saddest hours we prize*."

Now these are the ways of life. The psalmist was hoping and trusting that God would shew him these ways; and the apostle tells us that it was accomplished in the resurrection of Christ, and is now fulfilled in a glorious sense respecting our dear brother, who chose these words, and it is still to be accomplished concerning many of God's dear people. There is also a sense in which the Lord makes known to us the ways of life. And,

First, The Lord makes known to us the ways of life. He has done it in this respect in the coming of Christ; when Christ came into the world;

* Mr. Hart.

world; when he was born upon the earth; when he was God manifest in flesh; when his name appeared to be Emmanuel, which being interpreted is *God with us*; he was then made known to us as the way of life; God then revealed his Son, and, “the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world.” The preaching of the gospel also is a making known the ways of life, only there are many that hear (but blessed only are they that know the joyful sound) but all those that have any saving view of the ways of life made known to them; they are so made known by the teaching of God’s Spirit according to that expression of St. Paul, in the 4th chapter of the 2d of Corinthians, and 6th verse, “God who, commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” The apostle there compares God’s work upon the soul, to the work of creation. And the truth of the matter is, That we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works; the same God, that by his divine *fiat* brought all things in the visible creation into being; by his powerful word creates us anew; speaks life into our souls; begins and carries on the good work: and when this is the case, the Lord makes known to us the way of life; when the same Jesus that is preached in the gospel, is preached by Christ’s Spirit unto our hearts, and is formed in our hearts the hope of glory.

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This is the very quintessence of christian experience, the very life and power of religion. All religion that rests short of this is scarce worthy the name of religion; and those are really acquainted with the ways of life, who have them thus revealed to their souls by the Spirit of God, who are convinced of their undone condition, are made sensible that by nature they are dead in trespasses and sin, and are undone for ever without Christ, and have such a view of themselves and of him as the way of life, that they desire with their whole heart to be saved by him, and by him alone; and to be enabled to walk in him, as the glorious way to God, and to the kingdom of heaven. And when the Spirit of God thus makes known Christ to us, we then begin to know the way of righteousness; we then begin to know the ways of wisdom; we then enter into the path of salvation, and go on in our heavenly race, till we come to pass Jordan, have fought a good fight, have finished our course, and are brought to the enjoyment of the crown of life, which faderh not away. And the same God that doth shew us the ways of life, he shews more and more of them. Thus it is said, "The path of the just man is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We not only want one sight of the way of life, but we want continual views, especially of Christ, and hence we are exhorted "To lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and to run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

This is thy great business, sinner; this is thy great business, christian, to look unto Jesus; could

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we look more, we should not so often indulge our unbelief, we should glorify God more, and our walk and conversation would be more as becometh the gospel of Christ. And when the Lord raises his people from the dead, that is, when he raises their bodies from the grave, which he will do at the last day, he then shews them the ways of life, because they then will behold Christ as they never did before. Heaven is but to enjoy Christ! there is no heaven like a perfect view of the Lamb of God: And hence the apostle said, "Now are we the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And those that have seen the beauty of Christ, and have had the beauty of the world eclipsed by the sight of him, they will want no other heaven; they will be abundantly satisfied with the full and transforming view of *him* who is the chiefest good, who is white and ruddy, and who is altogether lovely. And, indeed, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what a glorious view we shall have in heaven of Jesus Christ: but we know that the sight of him will create fullness of joy, and pleasure for evermore. Then we shall drink, and drink our fill of the streams of that river which maketh glad the city of God.

We were to enquire also what is meant by God's countenance; for the apostle here, from the psalmist, not only says, that "Thou hast shewn me the ways of life, but thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance." And if we would know whether the latter part of the text will be accomplished to our souls, we should enquire whether

ther the Lord has shewn to us the path of life, or the way of life. If we have ever seen Christ so as to be in love with him, if he is the person whom our souls love, if our hearts are set upon him, if we desire him above all; and can say with the psalmist, " Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee, " and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee!" we may then conclude, That there is not a rich promise in the whole word of God, but is yea and amen in Jesus Christ to our souls, to the glory of God. And remember, christian, if this be thy state, though thy faith be ever so weak, though thy heart should be ever so bad, and though thy soul be so barren, that thou hast reason to cry out, " O my leanness, my " leanness!" If Christ is precious to thy soul, thou hast reason to say, (whether that injurious bar of unbelief will let thee or not) That the Lord shall make thee full of joy with his countenance.

By God's Countenance is principally meant the same Jesus, that we have before observed, is the great way of life; because I need not tell you, that God, as a Spirit, has no countenance. Countenance and face are the same; and the word, in the original, in the psalms, is face*; " Thou wilt make " me full of joy with, (or) in thy presence; in thy " face is fulness of joy:" and it is easy to observe, that when God makes use of such metaphors, when he speaks of his hand and of his eye, these expressions are to represent something to us of a spiritual nature, which on account of our dark understandings is set forth to us by those things that we are able to comprehend. Now, then, as the countenance of a man is the excellency of the man, and the glory of the man; so by God's countenance is

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meant the glory of God, or the excellency of God; and the scripture tells us that this is Christ. Thus it is said in the 1st of Hebrews, and 3d verse, "He is the brightness of his Father's glory, "and the express image of his person." The scripture is never fearful of giving too much honour to Christ, however some men may be inclined to that in the present day. The scripture speaks of Christ in the most high terms; and well it may, for it was the Spirit of Christ that inspired the whole of it, and Christ is the grand sum and substance thereof.

The scripture has no being that it delights to honor but Jesus Christ, "for in him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily." And when the scriptures honor Christ, they honor the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all the Three divine Persons are honored when Christ is honored; and so it is said of Christ, that he is not only the glory of the Father, but "the brightness of his glory, "and the express image of his person."

Christ, then is God's countenance, God's excellency; and when we see Christ, we see the majesty, the glory, and excellency of God.

And so, beloved, when we read in scripture of God's countenance, it sometimes teaches us what God is in respect of his favor to us, and as a man, by the form of his countenance, either shews his love or his hatred; so by God's countenance is sometimes set forth (when it is spoken of in a gracious manner) his love to his people; thus the psalmist prays in the 4th psalm and 6th verse: "There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us;" that is, manifest thy love

to our souls, manifest thyself unto us as thou dost not unto the world. The manifestations, then of divine love, the shewings forth of God's favor, the kisses of his mouth, the demonstrations of his grace and favor to us; these are expressed by God's countenance.

Now all that God's people, all that a converted soul experiences of God's favor in this world, is but a token, an earnest of what he is to enjoy in the world above; and therefore the enjoyment of heaven is to enjoy God's countenance, to have the smiles of his favor, and to have his countenance so lifted up upon us, that like the sun, when it shineth in its strength, we may behold his excellency, be comforted and revived therewith, and rejoice for ever in the full enjoyment of eternal glory.

Now, says our text, now says your late minister, in fixing on these words, "The Lord hath made known to me the ways of life." "I have tasted that the Lord is good, I have been not only an almost, but an altogether Christian; I have not preached an unknown Christ, but I was happily made a partaker of that grace which I wished to preach, that I wished to extol, and which I wished to adorn the doctrine of; and now I am going to a better world, the Lord will make me full of joy with his countenance."

It will be proper here to observe upon such an occasion as this, when the mortality of every one of us is brought to our view, how vain many things are that men are apt to seek joy in, but in the conception of which they are grandly and very much deceived. We find the covetous man thinks that riches will make him full of joy, but, alas poor worldling! he is but grasping a shadow,

shadow; riches make themselves wings, and flee away; they profit not in the day of wrath. Another man thinks that pleasure will make him full of joy; but, alas, what does he pursue? Look at the sabbath-breaker, or a sinner of any kind, when he has enjoyed what his heart wished for, when he has enjoyed all, if he speaks the truth, he must acknowledge there is a wretched vacuum which no creature can fill up. So the ambitious man pursues honor; one in one way, and another in another. But as the wise man says, it is true of all created things; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." And the same is true of the mere profession of religion, and of trusting in our own righteousness; nothing can make us full of joy, nothing can fill us with happiness, but God's countenance. "Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance."

Those that have had the smallest experience of the excellency of Christ, and that have had the holy Spirit take of the things of Christ and shew them to their souls, need not be told, that when this was done they were made full of joy. Thou knowest, O christian, there have been happy seasons when under the word; when at the throne of grace, when in the spirit of meditation, or perhaps in thy worldly business, thou hast been enabled to mount up as upon the wings of eagles, hadst such a view of Christ, that it has made thee full of joy; thou hast been ready to say, Be gone, thou vain world, and all thy enjoyments; be gone from my mind. Thou hast been satisfied with an interest in Christ, and with a view of God's countenance; thou hast been made full of joy. And so when God's love is shed abroad in our hearts,
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it makes us full of joy; when we have *ibat*, we despise the joy of the world. When we get into our dark unbelieving frames we are apt to turn to some broken cistern that can hold no water; but let God lift upon the christian the light of his countenance, and then he looks down with contempt upon all in the world, and says, What should it profit me if I was to gain the whole world, and lose my own soul? But the full enjoyment of these words are only to be found in heaven. When the soul of the believer departs, it enters immediately into the presence of God, and like the soul of Lazarus, is carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and is there immediately filled with joy. Every thing that would disturb it is eradicated, and the joy of God's salvation fills the whole soul.

And thus, when the end of time is come, the souls and bodies of all believers will be reunited, and then with God's countenance they shall be made full of joy, because every thing of a disagreeable and disturbing kind shall be destroyed.

Now, christian, thy sorrow is, that thou carriest about a body of sin and death; thou art saying, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Now thou art afflicted with the temptations of satan, frequently blasphemous thoughts are injected into thy mind, and thou meetest with many crosse providences, and great troubles from the world; but yet a little while and thou shalt come into the presence of God, then the body of sin shall never trouble thee more, then satan shall tempt thee no more, then the world shall no more harrass thee, the leprosy in the walls of the house shall then be eradicated, because the house will be pulled down, the
earthly

earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, and thou shalt have an habitation in the world above, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; then thou wilt be full of joy with God's countenance: because the perfection of those earnestst thou hast had in this world shall be enjoyed. Thou shalt have God's love fully revealed to thee, the beauty of Christ abundantly displayed; thou shalt know as thou art known, that which is in part shall be done away. Thy whole employment shall be to sing, "Salvation to God and the "Lamb," to tune thy golden harp, and to say, with all the elect of God, "Worthy is the Lamb "that was slain, for he hath redeemed us to God "by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, "and people, and nation, and hath made us "kings and priests unto God." And then thou shalt be full of joy with God's countenance, with the glorious vision, and with all that happiness, which it is impossible even to conceive, much less to speak fully of, but which God has prepared for them that love him.

Long ere now, our dear brother, whose death occasions us thus to speak, has experienced the truth of these words; he is now more full of joy with God's countenance, than we can have the least conception of. It is with him as it was with an excellent minister that long since died, whose name was Bolton: when he came to his death bed, his friends and parishioners who had heard him preach, and that had often found him speaking of the exceeding comforts of Christ to those that trusted in him, desired to know then, whether it was so with his soul, as he had before declared it was with Christ's sheep in general, and his answer was,

was, ' I am exceedingly filled with comfort ; I am ' more happy than my breath will allow me to declare. And like another, who, when he was drawing near to death, appeared to be so much composed, that all his friends were amazed, and they could not conceive how it was possible that he should be so easy, when death stared him in the face ; and his answer was, ' I have put my trust in that excellent promise, where it is said, Thou wilt keep him ' in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee, ' because he trusteth in thee.' And he declared, ' that his God had not only enabled him to put his ' trust in that promise, but that he now found it ' abundantly made good to his soul.' And thus it was with him of whom we have just been speaking, before his departure ; but how much more now, in yonder happy world, where sorrow and sighing are absolute strangers, where sin and a tempting devil dare not shew their heads : how richly is he filled with joy, even to perfection, from an enjoyment of God's countenance !

It is time now that I should hasten towards a close, after thus briefly and imperfectly speaking from these words, by taking some particular notice respecting our deceased brother, and that which more immediately appertains to him. And it will not be my province on the present occasion, to be lavish in my praises of him, as a man, nor so much as to intimate that he was perfect, far be this from me ; I will venture to affirm, that if he was now upon earth, it would grieve him that such a thought should be entertained : We conclude, that he had his infirmities, that he was a man of like passions with you and me, that a body of sin often troubled

troubled him; it was his burden as long as he continued on this side Jordan; and suffice it to say, instead of many encomiums, that for about ten years he had known the things of God, and happily experienced them in his own soul, and that near seven of that ten he preached the everlasting gospel; was honored to be an ambassador of Christ, and was very useful both to saints and sinners, in the course of that ministry.

As a christian, we have reason to believe that he lived much nearer to God than many of us do, and perhaps we were not worthy to loose the latchet of his shoe. But this shall pass, and let me only say, that there was abundant cause to conclude that he died in the Lord. Bear with me, if I only say that he was a christian, and walked worthy of his character, excluding infirmities, which are common to us all; and saying that, is saying much indeed; for a christian is the highest character of all beings, God and Christ only excepted; an angel is not so great as a christian, for a christian is a king and a priest unto God; he is a child of God, he is a brother of Christ, and the angels are the ministring servants of all the saints. It is also needful to add that it was my happiness to visit him frequently in the time of his illnesses, both when in the country for the air, and afterwards when he returned to town; and that in all these times he appeared to be happy in his soul; there seemed to be no reason to repent that he had walked in the ways of God, or that he had so faithfully served his master, but he was enabled to rejoice in God. Satan was not suffered to buffet him, as he buffets many of the saints; but on the contrary, he was enabled to triumph in his God; he longed to de-
part,

part, and to be with Christ, which is much better; and his language was, ‘ When will the happy hour arrive?’

There were many of his friends that visited him, who heard many excellent things from his mouth, which may be profitable just to mention; and we will endeavour to take some suitable notice of.

One of his friends, in the latter part of his illness, was with him, and he said to that friend, ‘ I am going, but blessed be God, I am not driven away,’ referring to that expression in the scripture, “ the wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death,” intimating that he had hope in his death. And so at another time when he had been sleeping, and awoke, finding his friends about him, he said, ‘ Whether we live, we are the Lord’s; or whether we die, we are the Lord’s; so then living or dying, we are the Lord’s:’ and he was enabled still to rejoice in his God, to triumph in his mercy, saying, ‘ The Lord’s portion is his people;’ and he compared himself to a child that is fatigued with his puerile amusements, and desires to be put to rest by his parents; so he was tired with all he had met with in this world, and desired to be taken to that rest which remaineth for the people of God: and when his friends were taking leave of him, they said, ‘ Friends must part, but souls united to Christ shall never part.’ And his answer was, ‘ Friends united to Christ shall meet again.’ And so the whole scope of his expressions was abundantly calculated to declare the confidence and joy of his soul.

On the Thursday before the Monday on which he died, some of his friends visited and sat up

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with

with him, at which time he expressed much concern at his departure; on this account: That it would be a heavy stroke to the church; but he exhorted them to cleave together in love.

The Friday after that, he was insensible; a certain delirium had affected his faculties; and when the deacons attended him, they were much concerned to find him, after being so happy, deprived of the proper use of his senses, and they prayed earnestly to God that he might still be gracious, and shew him the same loving kindness and tokens for good as he had shewn before; but they went down full of heaviness, fearing their prayers would not be heard; but ere they went out of the house, they heard their beloved minister say, 'Let us pray,' and speaking with so loud a voice, that they could hear him below; and in the midst of his delirium, though his mind was then disordered, they declared he prayed with such correctness, propriety, and weight of expression, that they had scarcely ever heard from the mouth of man; and the principal subject of his prayer appeared to be praising the mercy of God, for allowing us liberty of conscience, to sit down under our own vines, and under our own fig-trees, and none be suffered to fill us with fear; and like a man that already had got, as it were within a step of the world of spirits, he was led particularly to speak of God, as a spirit, and of worshipping God in spirit and in truth; and he appears to have concluded his prayer with desiring God to give us a right sense of Jesu's dying love (a good prayer) and with praying that we might be joined in one heart, united in one Christ, and spend in the same union, an everlasting eternity together. And thus he ended his

his prayer, beseeching the Lord to bless his church to the praise of the glory of his grace for ever and ever.

And, which is not a little extraordinary, when he had ended his prayer, in about five minutes after, according to the account given, he called for the Bible, (like one that was still thinking upon his ministerial work) desiring them to turn to the 35th chapter of Isaiah, and there took particular notice of the last verse; after some time he called upon them to hear the good word of God, which was recorded by the prophet Isaiah, and written with the finger of the divine and eternal Spirit; and he repeated to them that excellent expression in the before cited last verse of the chapter: "The ransomed of the Lord shall return
" and come to Zion with songs and everlasting
" joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and
" gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee
" away." How suitable a text was this, brethren, for a minister to die with in his mouth? It was a proof of God's goodness to him, that when thus near his end, he should be enabled in the midst of a delirium, to apply himself to so excellent a portion of scripture.

He appears in that situation to have had a desire still to preach to his people, and therefore he began with saying, ' That human life is well known to
' pass away, and that in the present life we are apt
' to be fond of carnal amusements, but that the
' word of God, the sacred writings were the
' ground of truth, the pillar of hope and eternal
' salvation; and that Christ hath the keys of
' death and hell, he openeth and none can shut,
' and he shutteth and none can open;' and thus he

went on in the same spirit in a variety of expressions that could not be well attended to ; and declared, at other times, ‘ That his warfare was accomplished ;’ and still prayed, ‘ That the Lord might be the guide of his people, that he might go before them and lead them in the right way, and be their God and their guide even unto death.’ This shall suffice, my brethren, as a few hints among many others that might be given, respecting this matter.

We have not now so much to do with the dead as with the living, let our dear brother rest there, with this declaration ; That a great man is fallen in Israel, and that it is in our wisdom to say, “ Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.” And allow me now to attempt an improvement of these things, by observing, first, to them embers of the church in particular, and to those who were once blessed under their late pastor’s ministry ; in what way they should endeavor to improve this providence.

First, let me beseech you, dearly beloved brethren, upon this melancholy occasion, as God has widowed your church, and bereaved you of your minister, be concerned that this providence may be sanctified to you ; it calls loudly on you to forget the things which are behind, and to press forward towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. It tells you in plain terms, that death will be your portion very shortly, and you should be concerned therefore, that by this providence God may quicken you, may draw you more above the world, may fix your affections more on things above, and that you may be enabled

abled to live more to his praise, to his honor, and glory.

And, let me intreat you, Secondly, To remember that which was the exhortation of your dying minister himself, "Cleave together in love;" be not easily moved to wander here and there, but go on praying to your God, seeking of him a minister; and though gifts and abilities of various kinds are useful, yet it is God alone that can make a minister fit for you. To him, therefore look, that he may give you a pastor after his own heart.

Let me add, Thirdly, That you should remember you must shortly follow your minister, and you cannot tell how soon it may be, peradventure this night some of your souls may be required of you; and remember then, you must give an account; and if you are found hypocrites in Zion, your late minister will be a swift witness against you; know that, though you may now pass well in the church, the omniscience of God will find you out, and with all your fair appearance you will have the portion of hypocrites and unbelievers. But I hope better things of many of those to whom I now speak, and things which accompany salvation.

Let those also that are real christians, remember that they must soon follow, and if so, let them be more concerned to be found ready, to be found with their lamps trimmed, with oil in them; let us be stirred up by this providence; I beseech you, brethren, to attend to the voice of it; calls upon you to gird up the loins of your minds, to be sober,

to watch, and to pray, and to take your staves in your hand; to put your shoes upon your feet; to put on the whole armour of God; and to be vigilant more than ever in fighting the battles of the Lord.

This also is a good improvement of the loss of your minister; hold fast that truth which he preached, and attend to those precepts that were the subject of his exhortations; hold fast that form of sound words; take heed of denying the divinity of Christ; take heed of swerving from the doctrine of the Trinity; take heed of rejecting the doctrine of the new birth, or of calling that enthusiasm; take heed of turning aside from the doctrine of imputed righteousness; hold fast the doctrine of the saints perseverance, and submit to the sovereignty of God; and not only hold these fast, but be concerned to experience them more and more. For it is not these truths, (excellent as they are) but the experience of them, that is attended with eternal salvation.

I will just observe by way of final conclusion, that there is a certain improvement of this providence which every one of us should make, we may say to all those whom curiosity has brought here. Whom went you out to see? or "what went you out to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" We live in a day when curiosity will bring professors here and there, and the word of God itself will scarce affect them at all. But as you are here, let me embrace the present opportunity; a good improvement of this is, that we should consider we are mortal; and are we living like those that are mortal? are we giving diligence to make our own calling and election sure? Do we make religion
our

our principal business? Are the concerns of eternity what we are most concerned about? or are we turning our backs upon Christ? If this be thy case, sinner, what wilt thou do in an hour of death? Thou must die as our dear brother has died. But, what! die without an interest in Christ? without pardon by his blood? without interest in his righteousness? Where wilt thou hide thy guilty head? Ah, how dreadful will be thy punishment! thou hadst better never have been born. And it is thy wisdom now "to give neither sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids," till thou hast some reason to hope that thou knowest what it is to be born again.

Further, we may all see from this the exceeding sinfulness of sin; there would be no death if there was no sin: sin takes from us our ministers; sin takes from us our children; sin takes from us our parents, our husbands, our wives; sin is the cause of a world of evil, and sin will damn millions of souls. And is this that which we are so fond of? Is this what we roll as a sweet morsel under our tongues? Remember, when thou cleavest to sin, sinner, thou art hugging a serpent to thy breast, and if thou art not enabled by grace to cast it from thee, it will sting thee to all eternity. Let us all learn from this also, the uncertainty of all the things of time, the vanity of the present world, the excellency of true religion, and how much we should prize a precious Christ. And should it not induce every one of us to cleave to him with full purpose of heart, if we know any thing of him; but if we know nothing of him, let us remember that we are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity; there is but a step
between

between us and hell; and if we live and die in that condition, "except we repent," we shall all likewise perish.

But brethren, consider, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;" now we have the gospel, but we do not know how long we may have it; such providences as these should make the church prize the gospel; God takes away his ambassadors, and we have reason then to fear, lest he should take his gospel from us, for we abuse it in a wretched manner.

It is well known that when a monarch calls his ambassadors from a foreign court, it is often a sign he is about to go to war with that court; and so when God takes away his ministers, we have reason to fear that he is angry with us, and that our ways do not please him. We have reason to pray earnestly that God may avert all impending judgments; to prize the gospel that we now have, to rejoice in the joyful sound, and so to live in this world that we may live for ever; so to live that we may have a happy exit, like our dear brother; that for us to live, may be Christ, and then to die will be gain; and that we at last may fully see the paths of life, and be filled with joy from God's countenance, may triumph for ever in the multitude of his mercies, may abound and be fruitful in every good word and work, to the praise and glory of God, to whom be praise rendered for ever and ever. Amen.

...ministers and private christians are alike led
...to the malignant aspects of the king of ter-
...and we live in a day, which is a remarkable

T H E
O R A T I O N
SPOKEN AT THE
I N T E R M E N T.

IT was a wise, a godly, and an excellent prayer
of Moses, the man of God, " So teach us to
" number our days, that we may apply our hearts
" unto wisdom;" because to rightly number our
days, to consider our own mortality, and to apply
our hearts to that Jesus who is the wisdom, as well
as the power of God, that he may save us from
sin and death, is our highest wisdom, and our
truest happiness.

The voice of providence frequently calls upon
us thus to attend the concerns of mortality and
eternity; but in the present instance speaks to us
with a very pathetic voice; in the death, not only
of a fellow mortal, but a fellow christian, and that
a lively one; in the death of a faithful minister
and ambassador of Christ, who is King of kings,
and Lord of lords.

Death is so merciless a foe, that, when the ful-
ness of time is come, it spares none; high and
low, rich and poor, old and young, kings and
beggars, the godly and ungodly, saints and sin-
ners, the uselets and the useful, prophets and apos-
tles

tles, ministers and private christians, are alike subject to the malignant attacks of the king of terrors; and we live in a day, when in a remarkable manner the righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart; none considering that he is taken from the evil to come. Ministers, in a striking manner, have been taken from us within these few years; of late, widowed churches have been very common, and our dear brother's decease has added to the number: his death (though our loss) is his eternal gain; for him we have no reason to sorrow, as those that are without hope. "For them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,"

His ~~now~~ perfectly happy spirit, which not long since was imprisoned, in a body of clay, is landed safe on the heavenly shore, above the reach of every storm, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are for ever at rest."

Long ere now he is clothed with white robes; a palm of victory fills his hand; a crown of gold covers his head, and he is now tuning his harp of gold, and singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for he hath redeemed us unto God by his blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and nation, and people, and hath made us kings and priests unto God;" and his soul, when on this side Jordan, anticipated the divine song. Thus it is with all those who follow the Lamb. For, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works follow them." When the christian dies, his spirit returns to God that gave it, and is carried by angels

angels into Abraham's bosom, to be for ever happy in the presence of God, "where is fullness of joy, "and at whose right hand are pleasures for ever- "more;" and when the great resurrection-day comes the scattered atoms of their dust shall be recollected, their souls and bodies re-united; and it shall be said unto them, with a voice that shall ravish their hearts, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, enter "into the kingdom prepared for you from the "foundation of the world."

But, ah! how unspeakably miserable are they who die out of Christ, who know not God nor themselves, and are strangers to the experience of God's people? They must die also, and their spirit return to God; tho' not to be happy, but miserable for ever. And in the last day both soul and body shall be fixed at the left hand of the judge, and to them it will be said, "Depart from me, "ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for "the devil and his angels." And who amongst us can dwell with everlasting burnings? Can our hearts endure, or our hands be strong in the day when the Lord shall contend with us? Have we an arm like God? or can we thunder with a voice like him?

And experience teaches us that no age is exempt from death, no appearance of health or youth is sufficient to insure us that this night our souls shall not be required of us. Our dear brother, whose dust now lays before us, was taken away in the very prime of life; and he that now speaks to you, has an only child, an infant, now lying dead at his house; and some are taken away in the most sudden manner: It is said of Anacreon, that he died drinking; of Torquatus, that he died eating a

cake ; Cardinal Columna, eating figs ; of Xeuxis the painter, that he expired laughing at the painting of an old woman he had to finish ; of Augustus, that he died paying a compliment ; and of Claudius the emperor, that his death was occasioned by putting a feather to his throat.

And is it true that death is so certain, and the time of death so uncertain ? how is it then, my fellow mortals, that, as the hymn says,

“ So unconcern’d we go
“ Upon the brink of death ? ”

Remember, my friends ; that our faces will shortly wax pale, our nerves will become unstrung, our blood will cease its circulation, and the place which now knows us, will know us no more. And are we prepared to meet our God ? Do we know what it is to be born again ? Have we fled to Christ for refuge ? If so, it will be happy for us.

Such of you, my dear brethren, who were connected with our departed brother in church-fellowship, are particularly affected *with*, and spoken *to*, by this awful providence ; you have lost a beloved minister and pastor, and it will be your wisdom to enquire wherefore the Lord doth thus contend with you. Perhaps you thought too much of your minister ; or it may be, you did not sufficiently prize him ; we are apt either to prize God’s ministers too much or too little. Whether this be the case or not, I am persuaded you will allow that you have not duly prized the word of God, which, from time to time, he delivered to you. Let this humble you, and yet rejoice, my brethren, that
Jesus,

Jesus, the great bishop of souls, ever lives, and he is able to supply all our wants.

And now, my honored brethren and fathers in the ministry, I know you will bear with me, if I observe that this bereaving providence speaks in a peculiar manner to us; it reminds us that we must shortly follow our dear brother; and it should make us more zealous in the work of the ministry, and more valiant for the truth upon earth; neither should any thing we meet with in this world move us, so that we may finish our course with joy; let us desire, like Augustine, to die *aut precantem, aut predicantem*, either praying or preaching; and let all present, remember death and judgment. If we are washed in the blood of Christ, if we are justified in his righteousness, sanctified by God's Spirit, then we may rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and may say, "O Death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; and thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us now by prayer and supplication, call upon God, that he may bless us with grace here, and glory hereafter.

III

F I N I S.

N. B. As it was not expected that the Oration would be published, a considerable part of what was then delivered, is of necessity omitted.

~~And now, my honored brethren and sisters in
the ministry, I know you will bear with me, if I
observe that this bereaving providence is also in a
peculiar manner to us; it reminds us that we must
thoroly follow our dear brother; and it should
make us more zealous in the work of the ministry;~~

HYMN before the SERMON.

~~with joy; let us desire, like Augustine, to
die our precious and precious brother.~~

LORD, I have wandered far away;

Times without number ran astray,

But Oh, that grace, that mighty love,

That would no longer let me rove!

II.

Jesus, thy tender bowels yearn,

Till thine elect to thee return;

To walk in thee, of life the path,

The Saviour from eternal wrath.

III.

Thy sovereign grace to me makes known,

Thou art the way of life alone:

The great high road to joy and peace,

The summit of eternal bliss.

This

IV.

This grand effect of grace divine,
Which is by blest experience mine,
Shall raise the triumph of my song,
Whene'er I join the heav'nly throng.

V.

My body soon must droop and die,
And then my ransom'd soul shall fly,
To fully praise the great I AM,
Th' eternal God and wond'rous Lamb.

VI.

Then death and hell will he destroy,
And make me full of blifs and joy ;
Then I shall tune my harp of gold,
While I his countenance behold.

By S. B****.

IV.

his grand effect of grace divine,
Which is by bliss experience mine,
I'll raise the triumph of my song,
Hence'er I join the heav'nly throng.

V.

My body soon must drop and die,
And then my ransom'd soul shall fly,
To fully praise the great I AM,
Eternal God and wondrous Lamb.

VI.

When death and hell will be destroy'd,
And make my fall of joy,
Then I shall tune my voice of gold,
While I his counsels hold.



By S. B. 1777.